

STANDARD USI.9a

The student will apply social science skills to understand the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by

a) describing the cultural, economic, and constitutional issues that divided the nation;

Essential Understandings

Struggles over the future of slavery's expansion agitated the United States for decades and led the nation into the Civil War.

Essential Knowledge

Issues that divided the nation

- Slavery
 - Much of America's economy revolved around the institution of slavery.
 - Slavery was growing larger, stronger, and more powerful in each decade after 1800.
 - By 1860, nearly four million Americans lived in perpetual bondage.
- Cultural issues
 - The North and the South shared a culture of Protestant Christianity, political beliefs based on the Constitution, and ideals of personal property.
 - A culture of reform grew in the North, fed by the Second Great Awakening, aspirations of social improvement, activist women, and charismatic reformers.
 - In the South, white people argued that the Bible sanctioned slavery and that slaveholders acted as Christian protectors of enslaved people.
 - Black Southerners saw themselves as a people held in bondage like the Israelites in the Bible and had faith, they would one day be delivered from slavery.
- Economic issues
 - In both the North and the South, most people were farmers.
 - About a fourth of white Southern families owned enslaved people and grew wealthy from their labor.
 - Powerful economic interests in both regions fought for economic advantage with government policies favorable to them.
 - Plantation slavery was economically powerful but did not develop as many towns, cities, and factories as the North.

STANDARD USI.9a (continued)

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- Constitutional issues
 - A major conflict was states' rights versus strong central government.
 - Slavery was the principal states' rights issue leading to the Civil War

Political Issues

- Voter in the North and the South belonged to the same political parties from the 1820s through the 1850s: Democrats and Whigs.
- The two parties found ways for the divergent interests of the North and South to be compromised.
- The emergence of the Republican Party in the late 1850s gave voice to Northerners angry at Southern dominance of the federal government out of proportion to white population.
- These political differences, fed by the invention of the telegraph and the spread of newspapers, led the South to secede.